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and quote once more from Moore's letters to his mother, on the occasion of a loss which was to burden him in future with their almost entire support.

"Indeed, my darling mother, I am quite ashamed of the little resolution you seem to have shown upon this occurrence; . . . instead of looking upon it as such an overwhelming thunderclap, you ought to thank Providence for having let you enjoy it so long, and for having deferred the loss till I was in a situation (which, thank God! I am now) to keep you comfortably without it. . . . Surely, my dear mother, the stroke was just as heavy to us as to you, for I trust we have no separate interests, but share clouds and sunshine equally together; yet you would have seen no gloom in *us* — nothing like it. We instantly made up our minds to the reduction and economy that would be necessary, and felt nothing but gratitude to Heaven for being able to do so well; and this, my sweet mother, is the temper of mind in which you should take it. . . . For my father's sake, (who is by no means so stout himself as he ought to be,) you ought to summon up your spirits, and make the best and brightest of it. . . . Your children are all well and happy, and loving you with all their hearts and souls; and, though for a time absent from you, looking forward to being very speedily about you, and showing you how fondly and perfectly they love you. . . . I am glad you *feel* how I love you. I can but *half* show it, but I would do more if I could. Bessy is continually making projects for our all living together; and no later than this morning, at breakfast, imagined a very pretty scheme for our taking the house next you, making a door in the wall, dining every day together, &c. I am not without hopes that some of her visions may yet be realized."

This man's poetry was not merely at the point of his pen.

ART. VII. — *Discourses on the Christian Body and Form.* By C. A. BARTOL, Junior Minister of the West Church, Boston. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. 1853. pp. 376.

THE word *religion* denotes *rebinding*, — the fastening of some sundered chain, — the renewing of some severed relation. Its earliest use, no doubt, had reference to the sanction of an oath, by which the natural obligation to veracity and

honesty was *bound* with renewed or increased strength. In this initial meaning, it implies a permanent and immovable purchase, to which an else unstable obligation may be securely fastened. And, in its secondary and broader sense, it still presupposes a definite, fixed, and unfailingly trustworthy object of allegiance and confidence, from which the soul may be alienated to its peril and damage, — to which it may reattach itself for its safety and happiness. In fine, the very name of religion indicates two parties, and the possibility of their holding a determinate and cognizable relation to each other.

Religion, then, is something more than self-development. Indeed, there is in this direction no material for self-development but ignorance. Ignorance loves to skulk behind euphemisms, and feel less blank under shelter of a name that seems significant. Then, too, the consciousness of personality and will tends to repeat itself in the realm of the unknown, by the conception of vital and controlling forces.* It is in this way alone that we can account for the fact that the word *God* has its synonyme in every language, and that absolute atheism has never been the avowed belief of a nation. In the rude infancy of society, when man's cognizance embraced but a few leagues around him, and a mile or two above him, the world beyond his cognizance presented no large or grand conceptions to his imagination, and he was ready to acquiesce in the most paltry and degrading impersonations of its forces. Hence fetichism, the worship of animals, and idolatry wherever it was any thing short of the deification of art. But as the limits of man's knowledge extended, his ignorance became infinite in every dimension; and, while the common mind crowded its Pantheon till every niche held double, and still had room for more, the speculative and philosophical were driven, by the multitudinousness of the popular mythology, to the indefinite, formless idea of the divine unity. But the God of natural theology is not an object of religion. The

* "Ignorantia causarum conferre deorum
Cogit ad imperium res, et concedere regnum;
Quorum operum causas nullâ ratione videre
Possunt, ac fieri divino numine rentur."

LUCRETIVS, *De Rerum Natura*, VI. 53-57.

conception, whether detached and isolated from the outward universe, or indissolubly blended with it, is too vague to proffer any hold for the personal relations of trust, homage, or service. Thus theoretical monotheism resolves itself into practical atheism.

Aside from revelation there is no religion. In saying this, we by no means deny the religious character of polytheism; but we believe that its worship was derived, through corrupt channels of tradition, from the primitive epoch of divine communication, and a heaven-appointed ritual. The mythologies that have been subjected to philosophical research, all bear indubitable traces of the events which are represented in sacred history to have been the occasions or means of supernatural revelation to the patriarchs of the earlier ages. The habit of worship survived the knowledge of its one supreme object, and attached itself to what were originally only its exciting causes, its instruments, or the recipients of a secondary homage, as reflecting the attributes of the Creator. But those who cut themselves adrift from tradition, and developed for themselves an independent idea of the Supreme Being, acquiesced in a divine essence, without definite attributes or personal relations. We therefore find the being and nature of God treated by the philosophers of Greece as a subject, not of ethical inquiry or interest, but of speculative reasoning alone. The case has, indeed, been otherwise with modern English Deists, simply because they have borrowed their conceptions of God, and of their obligations to him, from the Bible which they repudiate, and the religion which they deny.

It is in the German philosophy of the last and the present century, that we most clearly perceive the dependence of religion on revelation. The culture of all anterior ages has been forced, as by a condensing pump, into the German mind; while traditionary faith and reverence have grown obsolete. The result has been the origination of numerous abstract formulas for the Divine nature, bristling with indefinable terms and unimaginable abstractions. In one system, God is the plastic principle inherent in self-existent matter; in another, an otiant spectator of a system evolved by an *à priori* necessity. Now, he is a logical terminus, and then, a

metaphor for brute nature. In this philosophy, he is the unconscious totality of being; and in that, he attains a Protean self-consciousness in every human soul. Here, he has no existence apart from the universe, and there, he is the antithesis of the material creation. But in none of these formulas does the Deity present a point of attachment for the soul of man; anchorage for his doubts, fears, or aspirations; holding ground for his faith or trust; the possibility of religion — of a *binding* of the soul to its Author and Father. He is a shoreless ocean, an impenetrable mist, an impalpable ether, an omnipresent nothing, a nowhere present *one and all*, or an incomprehensible *not me*; but never an all-embracing Providence, an omnipotent Helper, the Hearer of prayer, the Father of all spirits, the “Rock of ages.” Devotion, divine service, and retribution are eliminated from the transcendental philosophy, and from the so-called theology — nay, from the Christianity — of which it is the basis.

Religion presupposes absolute being and objective truth. It implies, not a Deity conformed to the individual conception, but a Deity whose revealed attributes are the paradigm for individual conceptions. It presupposes, not truths which derive their validity from the reasonings and convictions of the inquirer, but truths which furnish an immutable standard of validity for those reasonings and convictions. The religious sentiment, so called, when divorced from faith, is in no sense religious, but might proffer no mean claim to the opposite epithet. It deals not with ideas, but with phantasms; not with influential impressions, but with faint glimmerings of impersonal abstractions. It is a vague and aimless wind, moving over the chaos of man's ignorance. It is blind wonder, undirected yearning, shapeless fancy, spiritual self-mesmerism, the spasmodic leap of the soul into the depth and darkness of the unknown, the groping of the inward nature, it knows not where, for it knows not what. Religion craves definite knowledge from authentic sources; and, as it relates to the infinite Being, definite knowledge from Him who alone knows Himself, and can alone teach us of Himself. It does not indeed aspire to the comprehension of the uncreated essence, of the mode of the divine being, of the

full sweep of his power, the depth of his wisdom, or the theory of his administration. It recognizes unfathomable mysteries in Him, whose being comprehends and exceeds immensity, and spans twin eternities. But there is an aspect, in which definite and satisfying knowledge of God is attainable. So far as our self-knowledge extends, we can comprehend his relations to us. So far as we can understand the constitution and condition of our race, we can understand his dispositions and purposes with regard to the human family. Though we may comprehend but an infinitesimal fraction, as it were, of the Divinity, we yet can form adequate conceptions of all that he is to us as Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, Father. These truths, appertaining to the manward aspects of his character and administration, must be not only surmised, but known, to render religion possible. But it is absurd to maintain that they can be known without revelation. Consciousness concerns our own being alone, and, at most, can apprise us only of what we might wish God to be, not of what he is. Our experience embraces phenomena and their proximate causes, without bringing us into direct converse with the Supreme Cause. The focus of the divergent rays of the divine manifestation in nature, is too remote for the access of unaided reason. Nor can any recorded experiences, beliefs, or deductions of preceding generations come to us with authority, unless there have been those who have enjoyed direct communication with the Almighty. It is alone from such communications of this latter class, that we can derive positive knowledge of his attributes, purposes, will, and law.

Religion must then have a historical basis in the supernatural. It must verify the truths to which it attaches itself by authentic records of the divine manifestations and revelations. It must repose on some epoch or epochs, when the ordinary course of nature was superseded, when there was clearer vision than is open to us now, when the divine became incarnate in forms patent to human intercourse and apprehension. It craves reliable scriptures, free from the doubt which must ever rest on oral tradition, and capable of being verified by research and historical criticism.

Religion is social in its very idea. The individual must needs stand in relations to God that are common to him with the race. His relations to his kind are essentially modified by their common relations to their Creator. Men are bound to one another through their common parentage, allegiance, and destiny. In the blessings, needs, desires, aspirations, which are the same to all, there are joint expressions of worship, prayer, gratitude, and trust, which grow out of human society, and which alone can attach society collectively to Him, whose sanction is essential to its integrity, purity, and harmony. Religious ideas, as they rest on an historical basis, can be perpetuated only by an apparatus for their profession, transmission, and propagation. These ends cannot be answered by the spontaneous expression of religious ideas and emotions. In the diversity of tastes, and under the pressure of secular cares, it is impossible that mere instinct or feeling could bring men together, and ensure their mutual consent, in modes of profession or in acts of worship. One man would be moved to pray, when his brethren were too busy to heed his call. Each would have his own choice as to times and forms. Each would aim at haphazard in seeking the consenting expression or action of those around him. The din of toil, the clamor of traffic, would break in upon the retirement where two or three were assembled together for religious purposes; and, were it not so, the harsh forth-puttings of their separate individualities would break up the assembly in Babel-like confusion. From the multiplied intrusions, interferences, discords, impertinences, which would mar every essay at social religious life, the attempt would grow infrequent, and would soon be suspended. New generations and non-religious families and communities would no longer be reached even by the sporadic voice of devotion or instruction. The knowledge which is the basis of religion, the records from which that knowledge is derived, would, in a brief lapse of time, become obsolete and pass into oblivion. Hence the necessity of organization, of set times for worship and instruction, of consecrated places, hallowed forms, and an established ritual. These may, indeed, be so adjusted as still to leave a broad range for individualism. Organization

may be left, in many of its details, to the circumstances or tastes of different bodies of worshippers; and a wide diversity of systems may equally serve the ends proposed, if they be only *systems*, with the functions, rights, and liabilities of officers and members clearly defined. The ritual need only be stringent enough to ensure order and regularity of administration, and may be adapted, in its fulness or paucity of ceremonies, in its prescribed forms of holy words, or in its openness to the inspiration of the moment, to the conservative or progressive spirit, the æsthetic or the iconoclastic tendencies, the more recondite or the simpler culture of different nations, communities, or congregations. The three things needed in the formal part of religion are, the *church*, or a social compact for the orderly performance of the offices of worship and instruction; the *sabbath*, or concerted and regularly recurring reasons for religious observances; and *ordinances*, or universally recognized tokens of religious profession, purpose, and self-consecration.

We have thus defined what Mr. Bartol, in the volume before us, aptly terms "The Christian Body and Form." In a previous volume, which was duly noticed in our pages, he had exhibited, in a series of sermons of rare beauty and eloquence, "The Christian Spirit and Life,"—the subjective part of religion, its emotional and phenomenal developments. The volume now before us is designed as a sequel or counterpart to that previously published. Its purpose is to define and substantiate the objective basis of personal religion. That basis, as we have seen, includes absolute truth concerning God, reliable scriptures, and enough of organization and form to serve for the social recognition, the diffusion and the transmission, of religious belief, reverence and allegiance; but we may better express, in still more comprehensive and in hallowed words, the simplicity of the foundation,— "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." The divine revelations and manifestations all culminate in him, as the representative, the image, of the invisible Creator, so that "God in Christ" comprises all that we do know or can know of God. For this reason is Christ the central subject of the Scriptures, which have a more remote or a nearer interest, a

temporary and local or a universal bearing, according as they describe the isolated acts and experiences of men and nations, or pursue the one line of blended history and prophecy, which stretches on from Eden to "Paradise Regained,"—from the first foreshining of the Messiah's advent to the yet distant consummation of his redeeming and renovating ministry. As regards the ritual of religion, in the endless variety of possible forms, and the unbounded dissilience of individual or national preferences, the show of virtual harmony, or rather compatibility, could never have been preserved, had not Christ sanctioned or prescribed certain modes of religious observance, which could retain their significance, use, and efficacy under a wide diversity of detail. Had not he hallowed the Sabbath, commended public worship by precept and example, prescribed a rite of initiation, and instituted a perpetual memorial of his sacrifice, religion might have had a "spiritual body" of revealed truth; but its visible form, its *epiphany*, its outward manifestation, would have been too vague to attract regard, to express reverence, or to cherish piety. Most aptly, therefore, has Mr. Bartol characterized his book as "on the *Christian Body and Form*."

We are glad that our author has adopted the form of sermons rather than of a set treatise. On an infinite theme, we like not the pretence of a compendious statement or an exhausting division. It seems to imply that the whole can be told. It violates the analogy of scripture and arrogates a comprehensiveness of wisdom superior to that the inspiration of which pervades the sacred record. God would have given us, had we needed it, "a body of divinity." But had the Scriptures been cast in that form, they would have been studied like a schoolbook, and the mind which in the earlier stages of its education had mastered their contents, would have had nothing left to minister or to correspond to its farther progress, and would, in the lapse of time, have outgrown and looked down upon its original conceptions. Whenever a compend of religious doctrine, a technical formulary, is placed between the soul and the Bible, it dwarfs men into theological pigmies, and they describe their subsequent course not even in a self-returning circle, but in a constantly dimi-

nishing spiral. Detached discourses, on single traits of the spirit or members of the "body" of religion, recognize the incomprehensible vastness of the theme, the inexhaustible wealth of the treasury of inspiration, the fragmentary character of our highest attainments, and the spaces still left to be filled by the breaking forth of new light from God's word and spirit in the present state of being, and still more by the revelations of the future life.

We rejoice, too, in the appearance of such volumes of sermons as can reflect credit and honor on that often despised, but inestimably precious, form of literature. We believe that the actual standard of American preaching, as tested by the needs and demands of the people, is far higher than is commonly admitted. The proportion of preachers that edify, instruct, and satisfy their congregations, is very large. But there must needs be many excellent sermons that would not appear so in print. Many preachers, whose talents and endowments are large with reference to their sphere of duty, make but a lame appearance before a more intelligent and exacting public than that to which they minister. Many sermons, too, that demand and manifest a positively high order of ability, are addressed to local and temporary states of feeling, and derive their completeness and unity from their adaptation to existing circumstances. Now it is precisely these, which, because they are the most impressive in the delivery, are the most frequently sought for publication. But occasional sermons (unless the occasion be one of widespread and permanent interest) do their authors exceedingly little credit and the pulpit scanty honor, when read out of the community, or subsequently to the events, which called them forth. And we believe that it is the prolific issue of these ephemeral pamphlets from the press, which, more than all other causes, has brought printed sermons into disrepute. But there are delivered, every Sunday, by devout Christians, able reasoners, and accomplished rhetoricians, numerous sermons, which can bear detachment from their occasions and localities, and are finished monographs on momentous subjects of religious faith and practice. Of this class are the discourses in the volume now under review. While, by their

deep seriousness of spirit, their directness of aim and appeal, their adaptation to the temptations, errors, and sophistries at this present moment rife in New England and its metropolis, they vindicate their claim to have been parish sermons for home use, they relate to truths of universal moment, to duties of unchanging obligation, and to phases of opinion and conduct of perpetual recurrence.

Mr. Bartol's style has none of the flash and glitter of a superinduced polish — none of the smooth and tawdry brilliancy of plating on cheap metals; but wears, throughout, a subdued, but never clouded lustre, as of pure and massive gold. We look in vain for the attempt to exalt or adorn a feeble or trite thought by verbal artifice, — for a showy metaphor, or a burst of declamatory vehemence, employed to replace the meagreness or to clothe the penury of sentiment. His words derive their glow, their beauty, and their force from their being the most simple, natural, and transparent expression of what he believes and feels. Yet his style is marked by striking individualities, because his mind never borrows moulds from another, but conceives of every subject under conditions, aspects, and limitations peculiarly its own. He is fervent, but his fervor is that of profound and ever-conscious conviction and experience, not the self-mesmerism for the occasion close at hand, which characterizes the merely popular orator. His eloquence is not of the *taking*, but of the *holding*, kind. We can conceive that his sermons might fail to attract the omnivorous reader, but they could not otherwise than constrain the lively and continuous interest of one whose spiritual nature has been truly awakened to a sense of its infirmities, its needs, and its destiny. He lacks vivacity in the lowest sense of the term; but of unflagging vitality we hardly know the religious writer that is so full. His periods are heavy, never from dulness, but from the solemn weight with which they are always freighted. He has a marvellous power of condensing thought, without becoming elliptical or obscure. He is highly imaginative, but never fanciful. On the other hand, his imagery furnishes a sign-language for severely logical statement, close reasoning, and cogent demonstration. He often couches a prolonged,

compact, and conclusive train of ratiocination in a comparison or a series of metaphors, which absolutely incarnates the truth under discussion to the conception of his readers, and makes the successive members of the argument move as in visible procession across the mental retina. If we may judge of his intellectual processes from his writings, we should term him preëminently a *seer*. Abstract truth passes before his thought in concrete, embodied forms, becomes impersonated and endowed with vitality, enters into face-to-face converse with him, responds to his interrogations, waits till he can sketch its features, fasten its expression upon the canvas, and portray the very folds of its drapery. We need not say how beautifully appropriate this picture-writing is to Christianity, which is, in itself, an earthly impersonation of the divine, and of which the Author did not point the way, teach the truth, and reveal the life eternal, but could say without a figure, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The volume under review is prefaced by a brief introduction, vindicating the necessity of the positive and the formal in religion, as that which alone can give fulness to the needy, satisfaction to the seeking, and repose to the aspiring soul. We quote from it a characteristic passage on the ritual of religion.

"Whatever may be the evils in an imposition of exact religious methods, to understand the worth also of such methods, one need only be occasionally in a region where no Christian institutions are observed ; but the undiscriminated days glide on in continual attention to worldly cares, while the general tone of thought is unbraced with listlessness, or let down into imbecility ; and, with no feet moving or standing in even beauty together to own what is above, the community falls laterally apart, each member to walk in his own separate, uncheered path through the world. It is one thing to be slaves to routine, and another to be animated by a decent order of divine service ; one thing to be idolatrous of the letter, and another to be truly evangelical ; one thing to be rationalistic schemers, and another to be reasonable men ; and Christianity's real proposition to us is of the happy side of every such alternative.

"What may be called the formal part of our religion is, moreover, but a vehicle of the moral and the spiritual. No ritual, of

course, is to be sustained for its own sake, but only in behalf of that spiritual elevation, which is the glory of our nature, and only enchantment of the world ; and beside which all that time and space contain is of no account, but as its means. As an ethereal essence is guarded for use in a phial ; as the elemental forces of nature, from their diffusion through the universe, are made at special points to strike and flash on our senses ; so is it with the divine power through the agency of the Christian services. A lifeless administration or deathly inattention may despoil them of their virtue ; but their fit and natural effect is to initiate the mind into a stronger sense of eternal realities than could arise from any ethical teaching. Undoubtedly, such services as at present ordered will at length fall away from the soul in the vast spiritual progress of future stages of his being. Nevertheless they are suited to train successive human generations, and especially to lead on children to their first perceptions of invisible reality, though they would not suffice to conduct one advancing intellect, supposed to remain on earth through all the duration of the church.

“ It is to be counted, too, as a great benefit of the rites of religion, that they operate to keep the spiritual in its proper precedence to the merely moral, and thus to insure the best morality on the basis of the noblest sentiments. The soul can no more than the songster, flying yonder in the summer-day, weave its nest out of its own bosom, but only from the material God provides. We must, indeed, know men by their fruits. But in order to good fruit, the first thing is a good tree. The gardener’s anxiety centres primarily on the seed he shall plant, or the slip he shall set out in his nursery. So what is most necessary to our virtue is that germ of a right disposition towards God, which comes from the exercises of his worship.” pp. 9 – 11.

On the same subject, the following occurs in a profoundly impressive sermon on “ Ordinances.”

“ Not as a superstition or weakness, then, but among the graces and virtues of the character, may be justly counted a love of holy times and places and things. So, indeed, nature herself, the heart’s own instinct, decides. For who esteems a man the more for being destitute of this feeling, and owning no such association as made David’s heart yearn for the stones of Zion, and her dust dear unto him ; nay, led our Saviour himself, on the sabbath day, as his custom was, into the synagogue, in the town where he had been brought up, to open the book of the law and read ? If the royal singer of Israel, and his greater descendant, could light the flame of their aspirations with that ancient

fuel of letter and form and ordinance, — he may be considered a mistaken, vainglorious, or imprudent man, who, from any hatred of old priestly corruptions, or offence at existing clerical pride, or supposition of a personal superiority, not needing foreign influence, loses or throws away the advantage of such habitual suggestives of those invisible and eternal realities, of which we are not too often reminded, and which we do not powerfully enough feel press on the heart and control the life.

“ Will any one still say it does not strike him so seriously? Will he allege, that, for his own part, he can afford to be slack on these points; and that he will, for his trust, fare forth into the unbounded freedom of reason and nature? Ah! that measureless field of reason and nature is too large to protect us. We are lost, we perish in it! Just as the whole great ball of the earth, with the vast spread of the atmosphere, is not a shelter for us; but to preserve the body, guard health, and lengthen life, we must build a house on it, against the wildness and the storm: so the house of God is our necessary retreat from the bleakness of an unfathomed universe, from tempests of mortal trial, and the winter of death. As when the first snow falls, and the north wind blows, every one rejoices in his roof and his hearth; so may we in the eaves of the sanctuary, and that fire of the Holy Ghost they cover. To run away from these, relying on nature and reason for a refuge, is like seeking the craggy, icy, and blustering peaks for a dwelling. Some young men lately went forth, thinly clad, and trusting to themselves to reach the summit of one of our loftiest hills. When they started, the sun was warm, the breeze soft, the path grassy, and all was inviting. But soon the zephyr turned to a blast, and the sunshine seemed stiffening to frost, and the way had become flint, and the unmoving granite rocks around them seemed to be terribly working a petrification of stupor and death within. Benumbed and over-wearied, they sat down to weep, and had not assistance come to them, would have surely died. So is it with solitary wanderers in the light of their own minds through this mysterious creation towards the incomprehensible eternity. The beginning flatters and allures, but the powers of nature fail on the ascent. The progress is deviation; and the end, bewilderment and death. Names from among the living and the departed alike might be given in melancholy illustration of so untoward a destiny.” pp. 27 – 29.

But we should do our author atrocious wrong, were we to leave the impression that the prescribed ritual of Christianity holds a sole, or even the chief, place in its “ body and form.”

With him, the body is Christ,—not the supposititious foundling of rationalism ; not the residuum of a heartless and sceptical criticism ; but the very God-born and heaven-ascended Christ, whom the prophets saw in vision, whose birth-song was sung by the minstrelsy of heaven, whom disease obeyed, at whose voice the grave yielded up its dead, who had the divine right to be implicitly believed and obeyed, whose continued presence, intercession, and mediation are the trust, hope, and joy of his followers. The whole volume bears marks of the simple faith of childhood, confirmed by searching investigation, matured by ripe experience, rooted deeper by its conflicts with unbelief, and deriving fresh nutriment from the rich and varied culture of the cognitive, imaginative, and spiritual faculties. We believe not Christianity the more for the concurring testimony of others. We think that we have settled the issue so thoroughly for ourselves, that we could not be driven from our ground even by a general defection, like that which has darkened the religious history of Protestant Germany. But in these days, when, in a once Christian pulpit, it can be uttered without rebuke, that “Christ wrought no miracles,” that “he is no mediator,” and that “an absolute miracle is an absolute impossibility ;” when mere sciolists can vent, before once Christian congregations, the boldest sophisms and the boldest blasphemies of Voltaire and Paine, without the reverence of the early English Deists, or the tenderness of Rousseau ; when, in our own city, thousands can be convened to listen to the coarsest ribaldry, and to hear the sinless purity of Jesus jeered at as “existing only in the dreams of girls,”—it is refreshing and exhilarating to meet such utterances of unshaken confidence in the uncorrupted word and the faultless manifestation of God, as abound in this volume, from one who, with a strong mind and a free heart, has tried for himself the great questions that lie at the basis of Christianity ; has sought intimate conversance with these modern (or rather disinterred) forms of infidelity ; has thoroughly sifted the popular arguments against revelation and its records ; and has entitled himself to the rest of faith, by having “fought the good fight of faith.” The following passage most felicitously exhibits the adaptation of the Christian miracles to an essential

element and an undeniable need of human nature, and the tendency of the mind, when deprived in this regard of its God-given aliment, to rush into those delusions, which, in numerous instances, have reached only their fitting climax in madness and suicide.

“They [the Christian miracles] do something to satisfy what may be called our natural longing for the supernatural. This, with some strange exceptions of peculiarly constituted, morally perverted, or logically sophisticated minds, all have felt. It possesses early the hearts of children, in their eagerness for wonderful stories. It appears in almost every form of religious belief and worship. It is manifest in the wellnigh universal impatience of the human soul to get beyond the region of fixed order and monotonous routine. Fair and beautiful as are the uniform shape and regular ongoings of the world, the heart is not content, till, in some way, it escapes from the dominion of its established statutes into the region of original divine activity, and immediate intercourse with the highest, ungovernable, and all-decreeing One. Our very frame is thus built on wonder, and presumes upon some supernatural disclosure. The very make of man’s constitution is a signal for the expectation of it, and an argument, not in any case, but in some case, for its reality.

“Yet, because superstition has sometimes fancied miracle, or imposture feigned it, there are those who, in the name of philosophy, would scout the very idea of any such thing, and class the New Testament narratives, and impregnable proofs of it, as no better than priestly frauds and old wives’ fables. Philosophy!—pretending to chain the Almighty to his works, forbidding the Creator to interpose among his creatures, branding a fundamental tendency of man’s nature as futile, and fixing the stigma of supercilious scorn on facts sustained by all the demonstrations that make history possible,—facts, moreover, whose very intent, while impressing the Omnipotent Hand on the human heart, is to break the otherwise boundless reign of superstition, and to save the human mind from those fictions and absurdities about the supernatural, into which it would otherwise hopelessly run.

“For all experience proves, that something, solid or shadowy, in the shape of the supernatural, human nature must and will have. It craves this, and without it, famishes. To this native appetite, the miracles of Christianity furnish the true and wholesome food. These miracles, being not merely strange signs and astounding portents, but as full of reason and goodness as they are of power, by their pure and lofty character nourish and edify the soul. They who are laboring to

cut off these mighty deeds, and to rob the soul of the nutriment they supply, would, by their success, only plunge it back into all the windy imaginations and poisonous falsehoods, after which, through each system of delusion, credulity ever hankered, and from which it is the Saviour's glory, by his bread of life, to redeem.

"From what a bottomless gulf the hand of Christ hath thus plucked us; over what an abyss of endless error, and devious abandonment to all vagary and deceit, we are, by the verities of his religion, safely suspended, is plain from the exposures of our own days, as well as the wanderings of past ages. The present time, of a somewhat rife scepticism respecting the Christian miracles, — not alone among the ignorant, but with some men of intellectual claims, — is, singularly enough, a time also for the setting up of every vulgar and trivial pretence of miraculous demonstrations. Some, unable to accept Christianity on account of its prodigies, seem to have opened their breast to the fullest admission of the ephemeral stories of preternatural power, and, by a backward way, to be coming round, through the amazement of modern discoveries, to an acceptance of the very religion which they had despised. It is curious, as a striking indication of the original and unalterable fashion of the human heart, to see the Babel tower of wisdom, so laboriously reared to heaven against God's word, shaking and tumbling, as a feather, before the breath of this marvellous rumor.

"It is not time, and here is not place, to pass judgment on the reported facts, doubtless deserving investigation, and perhaps only involving some heretofore unknown law, from which this new supernatural faith has sprung. It may only, in this connection, occur to us to note their vast inferiority, in all dignity and worth, to the miracles which we receive with our religion. In what port of grandeur the deeds of Jesus Christ stand apart from the insignificance or triviality, from the malice or the trickery, of these fresh disclosures! Indeed, these latter, whether offered in the way of an amusement, with noises and motions at a neighboring door, or, under the imposing figure of a whole community, rising out of like assumptions, in a far-off territory of Utah, appear but as a tinsel surface and hollow foil to the solid glory and eternal splendor of those works of Jesus which have brought God and heaven into contact with the human soul. The comparison is nothing but contrast. Until the recent wonders shall fetch us some revelation of truth or moral power or spiritual excellence, or even earthly convenience and comfort; until science or poetry, virtue or earthly utility, are advanced by them; until the angelic visitations, which they would imply, become as precious as mortal and human influence, now at hand and everywhere within our reach; or some of

the very personages called up act at least according to their former wisdom in the flesh,— we may well, with preoccupied attention, continue to feed our aspirations and rejoice our hopes with what is at once so much better and more available to our belief, in the sublime and gracious doings of him who was in all ways approved by God for the Redeemer of the world.” pp. 252 – 256.

We have, indeed, no fear of the permanent ascendancy of anti-supernaturalism. But there is one aspect of our times which sometimes makes us apprehensive of a temporary eclipse of faith. These are days of hurry and engrossment in secular and material interests. Through the stream-driven lines of daily intercommunication between distant nations and continents, through the continuous pulse of the magnetic wires from the confines of the arctic zone to the Great Southern Gulf, from the Atlantic to the late fabulous “far West,” the fortunes of the whole civilized world are brought under the perpetual and exciting cognizance of all its denizens. Rumor treads on the heels of rumor, and yesterday’s news is staled by the crowded budget of to-day. In mechanical and industrial agencies, marvel supersedes marvel, and this year’s achievements surpass the alleged possibilities of last year. The mind reels and staggers under an incessant avalanche of novelties, speculations, socialistic theories, political overtures, aggressions upon ancestral and time-hallowed beliefs, customs, and habits. He who would not be left stranded by the rapid, eddying current of the world’s tumultuous life, must make himself almost exclusively a man of to-day— must so identify himself with the new and the transient, as to find little time or disengaged thought for research, reflection, or introspection, nay, for distinct self-consciousness as a spiritual, accountable, and immortal being.

Now, the canon of infidelity was long since closed. No original argument against historical Christianity or its records has signalized the nineteenth century. Indeed, the purlieus of Antichrist are the only region upon earth in which “there is no new thing under the sun.” Every existing form of scepticism and unbelief has been triumphantly vanquished, and the Christian armory is full of thoroughly proved weapons of defence, and fairly captured trophies. Could we have the

patient heed of candid sceptics, (and we say it not without having made the successful experiment,) there is not a proposition or statement alleged on the side of infidelity, which we could not meet with ample refutation from the champions of our faith, whose works are to be found in the library of every theologian. But the suggestion of a doubt is a momentary process; while it may take hours and days of diligent and thoughtful study to rebut it. And of the thousands who will recklessly, and for the mere love of piquant novelty, hear and read the wholesale assaults upon our faith, there is but here and there one who can be prevailed upon to give his diligent study to its evidences. They are too ample and multiform to be presented in brief. It may take volumes to cover with rebutting testimony the ground laid open by a single sneer. Denial is cheap and easy, while proof must work its way up the fountain of truth to its original sources, in dead languages, in an unfamiliar age, and among a denationalized and scattered people. Thus, to take an obvious instance, nothing is easier than to deny the genuineness of the gospels, and to breach the theory of their gradual accretion through the first two or three centuries. But the evidence that they were truly the writings of the men whose names they bear, and that their text has come down to us in almost unprecedented purity, demands (and it amply rewards) conversance with the whole body of Christian antiquity, with the history of versions, with patristical attestations and citations, with a vast amount of ancient lore that has neither interest nor value aside from this end. If, indeed, men were not too busy to know that they have souls capable of perdition, and to become only dimly conscious of their infinite concern in these questions, they would spare neither time nor effort in sifting them to the bottom. But they are often only too glad to be released from the sense of obligation, and to escape the shadow of retribution; and, in the very pretence of rejecting the authority which purports to be divine, they will receive any loose, infidel opinion on the sole authority of any eloquent scorner who may have the fortune to arrest the admiration of an unreasoning public.

It is not on account of our sincere admiration and love for

the author of the volume before us, but because we know of no more timely antidote to the infidel tendencies that we deplore, that we have invited the attention of our readers to this masterly exposition and defence of "the Christian Body and Form." The author has talents and culture that might win for him extensive fame and enduring honor in any department of literature. The offering that he has laid on the altar of faith is of "mind and heart, soul and strength." It is the tribute of well-matured powers, in their deliberate, patient, vigorous exercise. It is worthy of one whose ordination vows have left their ineffaceable impress on his whole mental and spiritual activity. If it shall have, in any quarter, confirmed wavering faith, revived waning reverence, kept the young and impressible fast by the oracles of revealed truth, reclaimed wanderers from the fold of the Divine Shepherd, — this, and not our commendation, will be the reward which these discourses seek and merit — even "a witness in heaven, a record on high."

ART. VIII. — *The Works of JOHN C. CALHOUN.* Vol. I. *A Disquisition on Government, and a Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States.* Edited by RICHARD K. CRALLE. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1853. 8vo. pp. 406.

MR. CALHOUN'S works are announced for publication in four volumes, the second of which will contain his Speeches in Congress, the third, his Diplomatic Papers and Correspondence, and the fourth, his Life. Only the first volume has as yet appeared, and this contains two elaborate dissertations that had not before appeared in print. The principal portion of these discourses, if not the entire work, was composed, as the editor believes, "between the adjournment of Congress in the spring of 1848, and its meeting in December, 1849." Mr. Calhoun died on the 31st of March, 1850. This volume, therefore, contains his latest thoughts upon the subject, and has the melancholy interest which attaches to the posthumous